Halal slaughter opinions of Muslims around the world

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This paper aim to:

• Provide opinions of Muslims around the world on Halal slaughter.

The almighty Allah said in the Holy Quran:

قال الله تعالى: {يا أيها الذين آمنواكلوا من طيبات ما رزقناكم} (البقرة:172)

O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.

Quran 2:172

Before we discuss Halal slaughter opinions of Muslims around the world we must discuss:

1. The impact of religion on food
2. Current food situation for Muslims
3. Basic fundamental rules in Islam
4. Provisions of the slaughter and carcasses in Islam
   A. The welfare Issue, and
   B. Western legislations on slaughtering
5. Requirements of slaughtering of animals in Islam, and
6. Current methods of slaughtering in the secular industry
   A. Slaughtering facilities, and
   B. Stunning methods
Taking a quick glance to present human nutrition it showed that man who coexist with nature in different part of the world eat any thing that lies upon his hand whether it is insects, snakes, meat, flesh of dogs or rats, and worms.

No form of legislation to these eating habits has existed in the life of these peoples with the exception of those who followed a clear religious legislations on what is lawful or prohibited in foods and beverages.
Food has a great status in Islam. Allah has descended in the Holly Quran a full chapter (Sura) entitled: The Table, and another chapter in the Quran entitled: The Cattle.

Food and its derivatives has been mentioned in the Quran 49 times.

Current food situation for Muslims

Food were not a matter of concern to Muslims when the sovereignty over the land was in their hand as they knew the nature of their food: its lawfulness and its unlawfulness.
However, the balance of earth has overturned to become in the hand of non-Muslims, and Muslims have underwent securing their bread by others.

With the development of technology that began since the last century. The food industry has introduced endless types of foods of many sources. Therefore it was difficult to resolve its lawfulness.
Thus it is necessary that Muslim Muftis with specialists in food science and chemistry determine the religious status of their food.

At the beginning, the problem was largely linked to the meat of animals and its methods of preparation to determine what can be or what cannot be eaten.
Later the problem has extended to loaf bread and its industrial components of its additives like salts, emulsifiers, fats, and so on.

The problem has also exceeded to artifacts preserved such as canned meats, dairy products and their derivatives, and all forms of pastries, desserts, baby food, beverages, cosmetics, health and skin care products and medicines.
Since the development in the food industry was in the context of Western cultures.

And since behavior related to foods was closely linked to local cultures.

This has caused many problems and difficulties for food trade that was prepared and pursued by modern techniques, and was transferred to areas dominated by non-Western religious cultures.

In addition, problems were also faced by Muslim minorities in a society of alienation.
Basic fundamental rules in Islam

1- The general rule of things are basically permissible.

2- Prohibition and lawfulness is the right of the legislature alone, i.e. the almighty Allah سبحانه و تعالى

3- Making prohibition to become lawful or the lawful to become prohibited is one of the greatest sins.

4- Permitting or forbidding that comes from Allah S.W. must be thought of as it was due to reasons that serve the interests of human beings themselves.

5- Lawful is good (Tayyeb), and unlawful is malignant خبيث.

6- In Halal there is enough to abstain from Haram.

7- Whatever leads to Haram is Haram.
8- Trickeries on prohibited matters is unlawful.

9- Goodwill, do not justify unlawful acts.

10- We should be encouraged to avoid suspicions things for the fear of getting caught into Haram (Prevention of doubts is of priority).

11- Prohibitions is unlawful to all.

12- Under certain abnormal circumstances necessities permit prohibitions.

13- The basic fundamental rules of Meat is forbidden, and this is an exception from the general rule that the basic rules of things are basically permissible.
Animals and things that are of **no doubts forbidden** to be eaten:

1. Pig.

2. Carrion: the animal that died [Doom nose](#) without slaughter.

3. Blood shed: Spilled Blood from animals as a result of slaughter or wound.

4. What has been sacrificed to other than Allah.

5. Strangled birds/animals.

6. Death that is caused by any means of **Battering** on the head of an animal.

7. Death that is caused by **Fall** of an animal.

8. Death that is caused by **Butting** of an animal.

9. What has been eaten by **Prey**.

10. What has **Sacrificed on a monument**.

11. The sacrifices of the **Infidels, Atheists, Secularists** other than the People of the Book (for certain religious schools).

The prohibition includes animal parts and their derivatives of **blood shed**, meat, tallow (fat), enzymes, gelatin, and bone.
Animals and things that are of **no doubts allowed** to be eaten:

1- Sheep.

2- Goat.

3- Camel.

4- Cow.

5- Buffalo.

6- Wild animals non-predatory, e.g. deer, and the antelope.

7- Birds and poultry chickens, ducks and other birds of non-prey.

8- Fish and locusts.

9- What has been slaughtered under **non-normal circumstance** conditions of the animal, e.g. Battered animal about to die, and strangled animal about to die however life still remaining.

10- What a Muslim was forced to eat in fear of his death then he eat only an amount that will keep him alive.

11- All parts of the carcass are lawful to be eaten, even the non-born cow in the fetus may be eaten without slaughter, however if the new born cow left the fetus and it is alive then it must be slaughtered.

12- Sacrifices of the people of the book, e.g. Jews and Christians are not prohibited to be eaten by Muslims (for certain religious schools) unless it is prohibited by Islam, e.g. pork, or described as dead, or failure in its religious slaughter.
Requirements of Slaughtering of Animals in Islam

Halal Slaughtering of Animals in Islam is considered to be an aspect of worship. It can be performed by one of the following methods:

1. **Slaughter** (ذبح): a cut throat, esophagus and jugular veins. This type of slaughter is normally used in sheep, cows, and birds.

2. **Nahr** (نحر): stabbing in the area from the neck to the principle of the chest. This type of slaughter is normally used in camels and its likes and it can also be used in cows (for certain religious schools).

3. **Aqr** (عقر): wounding animals (i.e. meat eaten animals) in a non-killing area so that it can be controlled due to its brutal nature and this can also be applied in hunted animals whether it is a wild type or domesticated one.

4. Slaughtering must be done with a sharp tool, not with: a) a tooth, b) nor with a nail, c) or bones, d) or a tool that has no sharp edge.

5. Slaughtering must be performed by a distinctive person, Muslim or people of the book [Christians or Jews] (for certain religious schools).

6. At the time of slaughter the name of Allah is uttered (Bismillah wallahu Akbar). However, and due to forgetting uttering the name of Allah at the time of slaughter, and according to some religious school it is lawful to eat a meat of such carcass.

7. It is not permissible for a Muslim to mention the name of an idol or a great king or guardian on any name other than the name of Allah at the time of slaughter.

8. Animals that are distanced for the consumption their meat must be healthy, free of infectious diseases (e.g. mad cow disease), that could cause harm to its eaters.
The welfare Issue

It is a must to welfare the animal before and during its slaughter, e.g. not to torture with:

1) a blunt blade
2) or any types of stunning tools
3) not to sharpen the knife in front of them
4) not to slaughter of one animal in front of another

Western legislations on slaughtering

Western laws do not permit slaughtering of animals until they have been stunned (Pre-slaughtering methods to render them unconscious, or dead [stun-to-kill*] before they bleed) in a manner acceptable to the law and in accordance with the conditions of slaughter and type of the animal being slaughtered.

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Some Western legislations in most cases excludes slaughter without stunning, especially for some religious sects like the Jews in general, and Muslims in a very limited number of Western countries, or cases of slaughter required by the export of meat to some Islamic countries.

Current methods of slaughtering in the secular industry

Basically, slaughtering in Islam must be done without stunning of the animal, because Muslims believe that the Islamic method of slaughter is the optimal mercy and welfare to the animal with minimum suffering.

Therefore Muslims must introduce improvements in the existing facilities of slaughterhouses to suite the mass slaughter of large animals, so that it fulfills this concept at its best.
Slaughtering facilities

Slaughter boxes: These boxes can be used with and without stunning.

1- Rotation slaughter box: Weinberg model.

2- The fix slaughter box: Cincinnati model.

The use of Rotation slaughter box: Weinberg model without stunning.
Prevailed stunning methods used in seculars’ western slaughterhouses:

1- Shock on head by electrical stunners.

2- Shock on head by immersing in electrified water bath.

3- Shot into the brain by a penetrative captive-bolt pistol.

4- Shot onto the head by a non-penetrative mushroom gun.

5- Suffocation with Carbon dioxide.

6- Strangulation by the English way.

How much mercy on animals these slaughterhouses can further go? Is it the mercy they are after or making more profits?
2- Shock on head by immersing in electrified water bath.

3- Shot into the brain by a penetrative captive-bolt pistol.
4- Shot onto the head by a non-penetrative mushroom gun.

5- Suffocation with Carbon dioxide.

Using 90% argon in air or a mixture of 30% carbon dioxide and 60% argon in air
There could be an argument by slaughterhouses that a bird may be slaughtered whilst it is DYING but not yet dead (the heart may still is beating after the stun)*. 

We need to say that: the point of death** becomes the point at which death is initiated.

** i.e. if the animal is allowed to live again it will not do so.

Thus as a precautionary basis: Further interventions to slaughter the bird before its death is disallowed because of the risk that the time delay or a second stunning may result in death before slaughter.

* Rizwan Khalid
But what is stunning?
And what's wrong with it?

Seculars’ slaughterhouses support the use of pre-stunning and ascertain religious consumers that it does not cause or lead to death at the time of slaughter!!

But, how true is this statement?

Pre-slaughtering methods may cause injuries to the birds and animals and in many cases irreversible unconsciousness leading to their death before slaughter.
What is the effect of stunning on birds before slaughter?

In term of life and death on birds, many variables decide the effect of Electrical Stunning, and the most important ones are:

- The combination of Current (mA) and Frequency (Hz)

But

Low frequency is by far the biggest factor in causing death but we cannot rule out the effect of high current*.

* Rizwan Khalid
Accordingly, chicken carcasses, which comes to all GCC and Middle East countries from Europe, that are accompanied with a Halal certificate and is stunned with a frequency of 50 Hz the effect of stunning on the percentage rate of killed ranged from 61%-99%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current (mA)</th>
<th>Rate Kill</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-100 Hz</td>
<td>80% ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Hz</td>
<td>80% ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In France as well as in many European countries birds are stunned-to-kill at low frequencies (50Hz)*.

Also, the electrical stunning requirements of the new European Slaughter Legislation 1099/2009 is stun-to-kill! So we may not even be allowed to use different currents/frequencies**.


**Rizwan Khalid
Moshonner M. * and his colleagues published the results of their research, conducted on Turkey weigh on an average between 5-7 kg to identify the impact of electrical stunning at high frequency, with fix electrical current of 150 mA for 4 seconds and different frequencies. The results of their published research were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (Hz)</th>
<th>Chickens</th>
<th>Turkeys</th>
<th>Ducks and geese</th>
<th>Quails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 200 Hz</td>
<td>100 mA</td>
<td>250 mA</td>
<td>130 mA</td>
<td>45 mA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From 200 to 400 Hz</strong></td>
<td><strong>150 mA</strong></td>
<td><strong>400 mA</strong></td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 400 to 1 500 Hz</td>
<td>200 mA</td>
<td>400 mA</td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


But the European regulations** does not allow the use of electrical stunning on Turkey higher than 400 Hz at 400 mA.

**Table — Electrical requirements for water bath stunning equipment (average values per animal) **

i.e. the rate of mortality in Turkeys would be expected to be greater than 50% when we use 400 Hz at 400 mA rather than the 150 mA used by Moshonner M. and his colleagues, so with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current (mA)</th>
<th>Frequency (Hz)</th>
<th>Rate Kill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At higher stunning frequencies (1500Hz) chickens recover back to clear signs of life that is breathing and moving after 16 seconds and 57 seconds of stunning respectively*.

But the slaughtering process of stunned chickens at high frequency, is much faster (11-14 seconds) than the time chickens recover back to clear signs of life (16-57 seconds).

So, what is the religious verdict?

We find the religious verdict in the Muwatta of Imam Malik: With Mawqoozah and in similar cases, if the animal/bird can not live with, it is not permissible to eat its meat even if it was slaughtered before death*.

Mawqoozah: Animals or birds that were stunned by a violent blow.
He also put a condition for the Zabiha, he said: if the animal/bird at the time of slaughter has No ongoing breathing and it is not in a disturbance state, then its meat after slaughtering is not allowed to be eaten.*

Zabiha: Ritually slaughtered animal or bird.

The criteria for stunning is very critical and must be accurate in terms of its numerical values.

These are chickens that were stunned at high frequencies and some were found dead before slaughter.
It is also difficult to control stunning 100% in slaughterhouses because:

Any changes in the trend or distance or weight or resistance, or the amount of feathers on the body will result in a mortality rates could reach a value that can not be tolerated from the standpoint of its religious legitimacy.

Theoretically, stunning should cause less amount of bleeding.

However, few published works showed just the opposite.

But, wait! Does the amount of blood matters?
Bleeding Pattern

The Hadith of prophet Mohammed peace be upon him focused on the bleeding pattern rather than the amount of blood that comes out at the time of actual cut of the arteries.

We believe that the bleeding pattern may have an impact on draining and purification of impure blood from different parts of the animal such as its muscles (breast, thigh, wings, etc.).

Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him said: «What cause it to bleed like rivers and the name of God was uttered upon it then eat, ------------------------» * Agreed.

Bleeding or gushing like rivers is a pattern of bleeding that does not normally occurs when we use stunning prior to slaughter especially when there is a time delay in slaughter.
The **bleeding pattern** with pre-stunning methods if slaughtering was not immediately done is like dropping bloods (liquid being poured from its reservoir) and not like a gushing rivers.

What follows is that the use of **pre-stunning methods** does not comply with Halal standards because it does not meet the criteria of bleeding pattern as prescribed in the previous Hadith.
All pre-slaughtering methods are forbidden in strict Halal or Kosher slaughter. Why*?

Because they render the bird critically irreversibly injures at the time of slaughter with often unstable life (if not dead) that makes them Non-Halal / Non-Kosher and thus forbidden to be as a source of food to Muslims and Jews.

* Sayda A. M. Ali, Hyder O. Abdalla, and Ibrahim M. Mahgoub: Effect of slaughtering methods on the keeping quality of broilers chickens meat (email: saydamhmmd@yahoo.com)

Gas stunning

This method of stunning is mostly a European initiative

The Farm Animal Welfare Council in the U.K. state: because electrical stunning is not completely effective in inducing death to birds.

They suggested that research should be carried out to test the suitability of using carbon dioxide for stunning poultry while they are still in their transport containers**.

**Welfare During Stunning and Slaughter of Poultry: MOHAN RAI, Division of Food Animal Science, University of Bristol, Langford BS40 5DU, United Kingdom
In order to fully attain the welfare benefits of this novel system (i.e. Gas stunning) under practical conditions, birds in transport containers should be killed with the gas rather than just stunned.

Under UK law, birds must be killed – not just stunned – by the gas, and this is what they said:

On welfare grounds, commercial killing of chickens and turkeys using 90% argon in air or a mixture of 30% carbon dioxide and 60% argon in air is acceptable!
The European Commission’s Scientific Veterinary Committee has concluded that “a minimum of 2-minute exposure is required to kill chickens with the alternative gas mixtures” (SVC, 1996)***.

So, it is obvious that the secular industry which is backed up by its secular society has long been heading toward providing non-ritual slaughter.

Thus the religious consumers will face problem in eating ritually slaughtered animal meat from secular slaughterhouses and enough evidences were provided.
How much painful is the pre-slaughter methods?

Only God (Allah) the Creator of the birds and the birds which undergoes the operation while being disposed knows.

Stunning is painful and a non-welfare act.
Pre-slaughtering methods definitely jeopardize the religious requirements of Halal or Kosher slaughter.

How does the secular industry’s looks at animal welfare.

This report was made by the Compassion in World Farming Trust*.

In 1982 the Farm Animal Welfare Council said that they were not confident that electrical stunning of poultry is as reliable as it is claimed to be.

It is generally agreed that from a welfare point of view it is best to use sufficient current to kill the birds in the stunner by inducing cardiac arrest (death).

Note that the birds going into a section marked “Danger”, “If stunning is supposed to be humane, why is there a Danger sign here?”
Dr Neville Gregory* has stated that a stunning current of at least 120mA (milliamperes) per bird will induce cardiac arrest in about 90% of broilers (Gregory, 1991).

In 1992 the European Parliament voted that a current of 120mA should be used.

Dr Neville Gregory is a pioneer in secular vision of slaughter.

Most automatic neck cutters in current use is nearly always not efficient (very rarely cut the carotid arteries i.e. not inducing death).

Dr Gregory has made it clear that a cardiac arrest (stun-to-death) should be induced at stunning to “avoid the problems associated with inefficient neck cutting” (Gregory, 1991).
Automatic neck cutters (Mechanical Slaughter)

Automatic neck cutters often do not cut from the neck but from the side or from the head (very rarely cut the carotid arteries).

Slaughter of Animals in Islam is considered to be an aspect of worship. It should be performed by a Muslim and not by a machine.

Having clarified the view and current situation of food and slaughter in Islam and gave summary on the concept of Islam on food and slaughter and the current methods of slaughtering in the secular industry, we can now state the Halal slaughter opinions of Muslims around the world.
1

In the Muwatta الموطأ, of Imam Malik

If the animal/bird cannot live with stunning, it is not permissible to eat its meat even if it was slaughtered before death.*

If the animal/bird at the time of slaughter has No ongoing breathing and it is not in a disturbance state, then its meat after slaughtering is not allowed to be eaten.*


2

Sheikh Prof. Nasser bin Abdullah Al Maiman*

On the basis of what have been said on the use of stunning

It is better not to resort to any method of loss of consciousness; we should close the door of its discussion once and for all; as if we opened it both lawful and unlawful things will be entered.

* Professor of Higher Islamic Studies, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, and a member of the Shura Council, Saudi Arabia
The fundamental basis of slaughter in Islam is to be without stunning of the animal; because Islamic way of slaughter is the best for the mercy of the animal and for the health of human consumers.

For large size animals, modern slaughterhouses are requested to improve their means of slaughter to fulfill this fundamental basis.

- It is prohibited to stun animals using of bolt shot pistol, mushroom gun, hammer, or by bloating according to the English way.

- It is prohibited to stun chicken as it is proven by experience that quite numbers of them die before slaughter.
The fundamental basis of slaughter in Islam is to be without stunning of the animal; because this kind of slaughter is the best for the mercy of the animal and for the health of human consumers.

For large size animals modern slaughterhouses are requested to improve their means of slaughter to fulfill this fundamental basis.
However, under situations where it is difficult to fulfill this fundamental basis it is a condition that when stunning is used it should not lead to the death of the animal before its slaughter.

5

GSO Halal Standard # 993/1998 on animal slaughtering requirements according to Islamic law

3.2.6 Beating on head or similar action, such as using of bolt shot pistol or non penetrative percussion or stunning by carbon dioxide is not permitted.

3.2.7 Electrical stunning is not allowed in case of birds.
Automatic neck cutters (Mechanical Slaughter) are not allowed.

Conclusions:

It is the sharia scholars of Halal knowledge based on personal visits to slaughterhouses can evaluate present slaughterhouses practices.
Sharia scholars should not put noble causes such as feeding the general Muslim population and saving their money as an excuse of ignoring animal welfare.

Fatwas that previously approved secular slaughter practices must be reviewed by experts in Halal.
References


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With brother Amjad Mahboob in Australia in 1981